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The Turner Problem

IT MAY be a surprise to the White House staff, but anyone who has read a newspaper or heard a tv newscast in the past few months must know that Admiral Stansfield Turner, Director of the CIA, is in serious trouble.

Since his wholesale dismissal of CIA agents last year, Turner has been under heavy fire within the intelligence establishment for his heavy-handed tactics.

Even if the firings could have been justified in the name of economy or efficiency, the manner in which they were carried out was deplorable. The victims were given no advance notice and no explanation—just a slip of paper telling them they were sacked.

Emphasizing his determination to stick his head in the sand with regard to the Turner problem, the President Tuesday signed an order giving the controversial Admiral an even

larger role in over-all U.S. intelligence operations.

It is hard to believe that the White House is under the impression that all is well at the CIA.

But when confronted with a newspaper report that officials within the Administration were urging Turner's replacement, Presidential Press Secretary Jody Powell responded: "There is absolutely no truth to it. No one wants Turner out."

Indeed, the latest "unnamed sources" report of an anti-Turner movement may not be accurate in every detail. But it is no secret that Turner has wrecked morale in the CIA and is widely regarded throughout the intelligence community as a tactless, ambitious bull in the china closet.

Here is a clear case of ostrich-like conduct at the White House. Somebody ought to explain the facts to Jody Powell and the President.